



MARYLAND MODEL FOR SCHOOL READINESS

200 W. Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

Revised May 2001

What is the Maryland Model for School Readiness?

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) is a framework for teachers to help them instruct and assess young children in the skills they need to be ready for school. In order to implement the MMSR effectively, teachers of young children receive intensive staff development that currently includes the following elements:

- ♦ Maryland's definition of "school readiness"
- ♦ Vision and belief statement for primary level assessment
- ♦ End of kindergarten expectations
- ♦ Primary Assessment Planning Guide, which aligns local curriculum, instruction, and assessment for early childhood education programs
- ♦ Systematic assessment method which matches classroom instruction with the Work Sampling System™* (WSS) or compatible assessment systems
- ♦ Focus on assessment, instruction, family communication, and articulation among early childhood programs.

How does the MMSR define children's readiness for school?

MMSR defines school readiness as the state of early development that enables a child to engage in and benefit from primary learning experiences. As a result of family nurturing and interactions with others, a young child in this stage has reached certain levels of physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, language development, cognition and general knowledge. School readiness acknowledges individual approaches toward learning as well as unique experiences and backgrounds of each child.

How does the Work Sampling System (WSS) relate to the MMSR?

The MMSR includes the WSS that is nationally and internationally considered a state-of-the-art assessment system for early learning. The WSS helps teachers document and assess children's skills, knowledge, behavior, and academic accomplishment across a variety of developmental and curricular areas. Through observation, recording, and evaluating everyday classroom experiences and activities, teachers gain a better understanding of what students know, are able to do, and what they still need to work on. Thus, the WSS is not a conventional readiness test. It is designed to support the learning of each student toward consistent expectations across seven developmental and curricular domains:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ♦ Social and Personal Development | ♦ Language and Literacy |
| ♦ Mathematical Thinking | ♦ Scientific Thinking |
| ♦ Social Studies | ♦ The Arts |
| ♦ Physical Development | |

Some local school systems and early childhood providers are using compatible assessment systems that reflect the curricular domains of the WSS.

(*™ Trademark for Rebus, Inc at www.rebusinc.com or 1-800-435-3085)

How does the MMSR work in the classroom?

Teachers and providers implement MMSR by:

- ♦ Planning instruction that aligns curriculum, assessment and instruction
- ♦ Observing and documenting students' performance
- ♦ Modifying instruction to meet each student's strengths and needs as a result of ongoing documentation of students' performance in the classroom
- ♦ Communicating readiness expectations and students' learning profiles with families so that they can support their children's learning at home
- ♦ Articulating students' progress with receiving teachers and instructional specialists. Early care providers articulate children's progress with public schools.

What are the benefits for teachers and students?

Teachers gain an in-depth understanding of children's learning which allows them to probe more deeply into the learning potential of every child in their classrooms. Children benefit from teachers who are intent on understanding their individual strengths and needs. They also gain from the communication between their teachers and their families who work together so that early school years are a positive experience.

Who is participating?

As of school year 2000-01, 1300 kindergarten teachers from all 24 local school systems received MMSR staff development. Most of the school systems also include prekindergarten teachers in the staff development program. In addition, early childhood special educators have participated in the MMSR staff development. MSDE also offers MMSR Institutes on Mathematics, Science, and Early Literacy to teachers who have had at least one year of basic MMSR training. MMSR staff development is also being implemented in the Head Start and child care programs across the state.

How does the use of WSS relate to readiness baseline information?

For the first time in school year 2000-01, kindergarten teachers from all local school systems used WSS to generate information on student readiness for every county. The information includes the teachers' assessment of students on selected WSS performance indicators across the seven WSS domains. The information is reported out for three categories reflecting the full range of skills that young children bring to kindergarten. Children who are "fully ready" demonstrate the skills and behaviors which are needed to meet typical kindergarten expectations. Students "approaching" readiness inconsistently demonstrate these skills and require targeted support. Those students who are rated "developing" need considerable instructional support.

How can the WSS baseline information be used?

Baseline information on entering kindergartners is primarily used to assist teachers, providers, and policymakers to:

- ♦ Develop community needs assessment regarding the skill levels of children entering kindergarten
- ♦ Target federal, state, and local funds for early childhood programs and support services
- ♦ Develop forums for building partnerships
- ♦ Enhance curricular and intervention for young children.



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